Story in the Story: Joseph Goldin	

(Excerpt from Franz Nahrada missive on Earthday founder, John McConnell)
http://www.dorfwiki.org/wiki.cgi?FranzNahrada/MyStoryWithJohnMcConnell

The Global Tea Party
With Joseph Goldin, Allan Lundell, & Sun Marian McNamee

So enter this Mr. Joseph Goldin - originally from Russia, one of those dazzling phenomena of the Gorbachev years in the Soviet Union, where you never knew where idealism ends and fortune-telling begins.
It was the mid-1980s when the first signs of a thaw with the election of Gorbachev and the summit meeting with Reagan in Geneva in 1985 gave rise to hopes of an end to the Cold War between East and West.
A visible sign of this was that the Live Aid Synchron concert organized by Bob Geldof and Midge Ure took place not only at

London's Wembley Stadium and in Philadelphia and Sydney, but also in Moscow. There were not only live acts at these venues, but probably also one of the largest - if not the largest - public viewings in history, a television program that was probably watched by almost 2 billion people, a huge number at the time.
It was preceded by three years of experimentation, and Joseph Goldin was a leading participant on the Russian side from the very beginning. He was fascinated by the huge color screens from Mitsubishi produced for mass events, extremely expensive, and actually managed to have them reproduced with a lot of improvisation in the Soviet Union. There were regular events called "Telemost" or "Space Bridge" [1], but Goldin became particularly interested in mass interaction. In April 1986, he persuaded the Moscow city council to let passers-by speak live with two Soviet cosmonauts, to mark the anniversary of Gagarin's first flight into space.
In an interview with Robert Gilman from "In Context

Magazine", he sayd that an idea for a "Global Townhall Meeting" was born that day. It's a long quote, but I've always found it fascinating and challenging, as I said it was deeply influental on many people and also on me: you can find it in a legendary edition of this truly groundbreaking magazine, still available -

https://www.context.org/iclib/ic15/goldin/

"Space bridges over the last four years have been reduced to exchanges between a select few, scripted with provisional scripts, videotaped, edited and shown later, with no chance of spontaneity. This is not my story - it is someone else's story. Misunderstandings between the Soviet Union and the United States can only be resolved through direct and spontaneous contact between large groups of Russians and Americans. As long as communication is not spontaneous and between large groups, this is not my story."
"Gigantic video screens used for bilateral

communication between thousands of people could become a traditional element of the environment in every city and village, just like the public squares of the Greek city-states or the forums of the Roman Empire. The new sense of "distant proximity" experienced by millions of people around the world would create a new consciousness and inevitably lead to a radical change in the way we deal with global problems."

"Imagine a small city connected to the network of Spacebridge terminals. This would allow us to create a 'city-as-classroom' model for lifelong learning. The entire population of the city could participate in multilateral communication with other cities around the world. There would be an immediate temptation for truly creative scholars and artists to join forces to help ordinary residents transform themselves into global citizens. If a hundred Americans took on the role of Russians to master the Russian language in three weeks (or vice versa), it would also be an opportunity to evaluate a nation's perceptions and misperceptions

about itself and other nations."
"Or if several thousand people were involved in a living theater event staged by advanced directors, designers and actors, it would not just be routine entertainment, but the introduction of ordinary people to the zone of expanded consciousness."
"Hidden human reserves can manifest in almost any field of human endeavor: accelerated learning methods; physical transformation through sports; meditative disciplines; spiritual healing; heightened capacity for intuition and extrasensory perception; general phenomena of "peak experience" as a means of cultivating universal thought, and so on. But the potential of hidden human reserves has never been considered by strategic planners, global modelers or ordinary voters. Something should be done to break the vicious cycle of fear and mistrust so that we can finally reorient technology from weapons to "food" and thus change the entire paradigm of modern culture."
Amazing what the Soviet visionary originally

had said in 1987. I have come to the conclusuion that there were many similar visionary outbreaks like the "New Theory of Settlement" in this time, that the world did not notice until today, but thats another story. Goldin was indeed a key driver of projects and challenged his Western partners to experiment, although their reports already showed that they were dealing with a very difficult person. On the one hand, I see in him an almost naïve idealist, trusting totally in the spontaneity of encounters and, on the other hand, I see desperate efforts by his partners to accompany them with professional moderation.

In the end, the project became detached from its initiator, as is easy to understand from the interview above. The video bridges were continued in television studios by professional presenters such as Phil Donahue and Vladimir Pozner, and actually became an awareness-raising factor that supported the spirit of perestroika.

And indeed, the story of Joseph Goldin has taken a very ironic turn: In an effort to prove

his theory of spontaneous communication somewhere and somehow, he ended up with me among many others. As said above, Goldin called John and me tirelessly every day from Los Angeles and wanted me to reallocate all the resources of the Global Village conference to his experiment. Fortunately, I found friends (Allan Lundell & Sun Marian McNamee) who transformed the whole thing into a small event on the fringes of the human rights conference, called the "Global Tea Party", with the tiny screen of the videophone as a meeting space, and who subsequently shielded me and let me work undisturbed on the first Global Village. We had used the resources of the Telekom companies in the Prechtsaal at the TU to extend professional applications from local networks to long distances. But nevertheless, the ideas of using the tools of visual communication for general dialog and cultural understanding remained in the back of my mind, so to speak.